



CFS REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR AFRICA ON THE PREPARATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON FOOD SYSTEMS AND NUTRITION

ADDIS ABABA, 16-17 JULY 2019

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

There were 63 participants at the meeting representing governments¹, civil society and indigenous people organizations, private sector, international organizations² regional organizations³, and research institutions⁴.

The CFS Secretariat was represented by Dr Jessica Fanzo and Mr Emilio Colonnelli.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Liliane Ortega, Chair of the CFS Open-Ended Working Group on Food Systems and Nutrition.

The meeting was opened by Dr Laila Lokosang AU/CAADP, Dr James Diri, FAO Subregional Office for Eastern Africa, Dr Mutale Mumba, WHO representative in Ethiopia and Dr Liliane Ortega.

The following comments and proposals were provided by participants during the discussion

Comments and proposals on Chapter 1 of the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines

This chapter was considered satisfactory, and the following additions were suggested for consideration:

- The text should be more explicit on the drivers, new challenges and opportunities which are influencing food systems and will keep influencing them in the coming decades (trade agreements, food imports and their impact on local food economy, food safety, technologies, food industry development, climate change).
- Additional language should also be included on how food systems relate to livelihood and inequalities. In other words, more should be said on how the root causes of malnutrition

¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

² FAO, WFP, IFAD, WHO, and UNICEF.

³ African Union Commission, NEPAD, Easter Africa Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (EAPA FSN).

⁴ International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

often lay within the food systems themselves, in particular at the production level, highlighting the specific situation of women, and smallholder farmers.

- Cultural aspects concerning food systems and their relation to malnutrition should be more prominent.
- The need to address policy fragmentation (mentioned in para 12) should be further developed to better clarify the aim of the Voluntary Guidelines towards fostering policy coherence.
- The constraints of food systems in humanitarian contexts should be more visible and refugees and displaced people should be mentioned amongst the most vulnerable people.
- The existing regional processes and frameworks dealing with food security and nutrition should be mentioned (para 15).

Many comments related to capacity building, research, food production and value chains, seasonality of food availability, food education, food and postharvest loss, youth skills development and entrepreneurship, the necessity of better monitoring, data collection and using statistics to inform action as well as the important role of parliamentarians have been mentioned which will better fit in the next version of Chapters 3 and 4.

Comments and proposals on Chapter 2 of the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines

The existing guiding principles were well-received by the participants who provided the following comments and proposals:

- Commitment and accountability of stakeholders should be part of the principles.
- Adding indigenous and traditional knowledge in the nutrition knowledge-related principle to acknowledge their value.
- Fostering equality and non-discrimination, recalling the indivisibility of human rights, was suggested as an additional principle.
- Political support to food production through food producers' empowerment was proposed as an additional principle.

Comments and proposals on Chapter 3 of the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines

The following interventions, policies and institutional arrangements were presented and discussed for possible inclusion in the Voluntary Guidelines:

- Governance, multi-stakeholder engagement, coordination and policy coherence across sectors, transparency, accountability of the different actors across sectors were mentioned as key elements to be addressed.
- Linkages with existing regional instruments (CAADP Framework for Food Security, SADC, EAC and ECOWAS Food systems and Nutrition Policy) need to be established in order to build on existing political decision and frameworks.

- Integrate food and nutrition policies into national strategies and elaborate the mechanisms to enforce them as a way to ensure their effective implementation.
- Nutrition objectives and indicators should be integrated into national agriculture policies.
- Sustainable, diverse and nutrition sensitive production models should be promoted and interventions should look at:
 - promoting consumption of locally produced foods (use of incentives);
 - supporting small food producers and paying more attention to fisheries;
 - facilitating access to land and other natural resources, addressing women' difficulties in this aspect.
- Implementable food safety policies should be developed, and the impact of standards in different countries should be considered, effective surveillance systems should be put in place.
- Attention should be paid to the development of environmentally friendly food systems, and to the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies to enhance existing national efforts and the implementation of strategies of sub-regional organizations, such as CILSS.
- Regulations and standards should be strengthened:
 - on the use of pesticides and other chemicals;
 - to encourage farmer productivity;
 - to ensure production of quality food;
 - and to enforce transboundary pests and diseases control measures.
- Specific attention should be paid to value chains, access to finance and role of small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs)
- Science and technology need to have a prominent role in the Voluntary Guidelines.
- Nutrition education, information and advocacy should be streamlined in order to highlight the role of media and advertising to allow consumers to make informed decisions and to foster nutrition education across all levels of learning.
- National programs of school feeding (including school gardens, food procurement from local farms, hygiene practices) should be promoted.
- With regards to dietary consumption, there needs to be more emphasis on understanding of nutrient profiles (food composition tables that inform food based dietary guidelines).
- Specific attention should be paid to policies dealing with food consumption habits.
- Transparency in advertisement and labeling of processed food products (on health related risks, use of pictures) should be ensured.
- Trade impacts and implications should be discussed in order to foster:

-food systems that promote fair trade and fair pricing of local commodities:

-pricing policies to promote healthier foods:

-implementation of nutrition-sensitive trade policies.

- Humanitarian and resilience aspects should be addressed for example through the development of instruments to ensure food supply and availability during crises and emergency situations.
- Youth aspects should be incorporated and highlighted across the food systems.
- Support should be provided to local initiatives dealing with food transformation and processing in order to keep nutritional value and deliver competitive products.
- Inclusive access to technologies and capacity building should be promoted to reduce postharvest losses, ensure food quality and safety, food transportation and storage.
- Actions should look at addressing informal food markets and street food (food safety issues).
- The importance of clean water for consumption and sufficient water for food production should be considered.

Comments and proposals on Chapter 4 of the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines

- The use and dissemination of the Voluntary Guidelines should be promoted in order to build an effective response to malnutrition from the perspective of food systems and go beyond the health sector as the single sector that addresses malnutrition.
- The key role of development partners to facilitate the use and implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines at national level was highlighted.
- All institutions of learning – not just universities but also high school and primary - should be engaged.
- Media and nutrition “champions” were suggested to be critical in the dissemination of the Voluntary Guidelines.
- The crucial role of parliamentarians (policy makers) needs to be acknowledged.
- The Voluntary Guidelines should also represent an important advocacy tool for civil society organizations.
- It is important to use already existing monitoring tools and frameworks put in place by other institutions, such as CAADP, SUN.
- The Voluntary Guidelines could be used to influence national food and nutrition strategies and to involve all parties across sectors. In this context, regional economic communities, such as ECOWAS, are key actors.
- Awareness raising campaigns need to be designed and implemented.